

3.3 LAND USE

3.3.1 Existing Land Use

3.3.1.1 Summary

Existing land use within the project study area was inventoried for project analysis. In general, the land use in Polk and Barron Counties is similar to that of northern Wisconsin. In the rural areas, the land use is a mix of scattered low-density housing, conifer-hardwood forest, lakes, and limited agriculture. In the urban areas, land use and development are limited to incremental growth. Communities like the Village of Turtle Lake and City of Barron have seen some growth in new housing development, but the pressure to suburbanize is not as great as in other parts of Wisconsin. One of the differences between the project study area and much of the state is the abundance of seasonal housing in the project study area.

Both Polk and Barron Counties have many freshwater lakes that are popular tourist destinations and the attractiveness of these resources has led to the construction of many seasonal homes. The proximity of the project study area to metropolitan Minneapolis/St. Paul makes the area a popular destination for Minnesotans as well as Wisconsinites. The 2000 census indicates that of the total housing units, 19 percent of the Polk County units and 11 percent of the Barron County units are seasonal residences. Over the past ten years, the percent of seasonal units has dropped from 25 percent and 15 percent, respectively. The decrease in seasonal units can be attributed to the increasing number of year-round houses that have been constructed and because many season houses have been converted to year-round structures.

Development along US 8 is confined primarily to the urbanized areas of the corridor such as the City of Barron, Village of Turtle Lake, and Range. Highway strip-development is starting to occur at the western end of the project study area near WIS 35 (N). This development is an extension of the development emerging from the City of St. Croix Falls.

3.3.1.2 Existing Land Use Patterns by Jurisdiction

The following sections summarize existing land use patterns for jurisdictions directly adjacent to the US 8 corridor.

A. Polk County

1. Town of St. Croix Falls

The town of St. Croix Falls is located at the western end of the project study area. Its year 2000 population was 1,119. The prevalent land use in the town is rural residential with a mix of forest and agricultural lands. The average parcel size in the town is 14.7 acres (5.9 ha).

The highest intensity land use is located in the southwest portion of the town near the City of St. Croix Falls and is located outside the project study area. Strip commercial development is emerging along US 8 near the City of St. Croix Falls and extends to WIS 35 (N). This development includes a mix of highway dependent and nonhighway dependent businesses. The development includes a tavern, antique store, bait shop, gas stations, pawn shop, and a modular homes retailer.

The most noteworthy natural features are Rock Creek in the northwestern part of the town and Deer Lake in the southeastern part of the town.

2. Town of Balsam Lake

The town of Balsam Lake's year 2000 population was 1,384. Much of the town of Balsam Lake is forested or lowland, and the topography has limited most of the development to higher ground. There are no substantial commercial developments along US 8 or on WIS 46 (N) between US 8 and the Village of Balsam Lake.

Residential development in the town of Balsam Lake is confined to two areas, the Village of Balsam Lake and near the lakes in the town. The average parcel size in the town is 10.3 acres (4.2 ha).

Natural features in the town include Deer Lake in the southwest and the following three resources in the northern part of the town that include Balsam Lake, Long Lake, and the Balsam Branch Beaver Brook. Polk County Park is also located in the town.

3. Town of Apple River

The town of Apple River's year 2000 population was 1,067. The Apple River is the prominent natural feature and is the town's namesake. The river runs from the southwest to the north-central part of the town. The only significant development on US 8 is the old mill located on the north side of the highway. The mill is currently closed but the neighboring motel is still in business. An asphalt paving company is located on the south side of US 8. A portion of the unincorporated community of Range falls within the town of Apple River.

Residential development in the town of Apple River is primarily agricultural or lakefront property. Like many of the surrounding towns, development is limited because of the low-lying land including wetlands. The average parcel size in the town is 15.6 acres (6.3 ha).

4. Town of Beaver

The town of Beaver's year 2000 population was 753. There are many lakes dispersed throughout the town of Beaver including Horseshoe Lake, Little Round Lake, and Charleston Lake. Another natural feature is the Joel Marsh State Wildlife Area that is also located in part of the town of Clayton. Commercial enterprises in the town include an implement dealer, storage facility, and a poultry-breeding center. A portion of the unincorporated community of Range falls within the town of Beaver.

The town of Beaver includes scattered rural residential development and some farmsteads. The average parcel size in the town is 20.6 acres (8.3 ha).

5. Town of Clayton

The town of Clayton's year 2000 population was 912. Residential development is limited in the town. There are a few scattered farm homes but medium-to-high density residential development is scarce. The most prominent natural feature is the Joel Marsh State Wildlife Area located in the town of Clayton. Most of the town is heavily forested with birch being the primary tree species.

The town of Clayton is experiencing development pressure from the Village of Turtle Lake in the northeast section of the town. The average parcel size in the town is 21.3 acres (8.6 ha).

B. Barron County

1. Town of Almena

The town of Almena is located at the western end of Barron County. Its year 2000 population was 910. Adjacent to the town of Almena are the incorporated municipalities of the Village of Turtle Lake and Village of Almena. Residential development outside the municipal boundaries is sparse with the exception of lakefront homes clustered around the local lakes. The average parcel size in the town is 14 acres (5.7 ha).

The largest lake in the town is Upper Turtle Lake. The existing US 8 alignment runs just to the south of the southern tip of the lake. The other prominent natural features are clustered in the northwest section of the town and include Echo Lake, Lightning Creek, and the south end of the Loon Lake State Wildlife Area.

2. Town of Turtle Lake

The town of Turtle Lake's year 2000 population was 622. The town of Turtle Lake is experiencing some scattered rural residential development. The topography of the town is more conducive to development than many of the neighboring towns that have a large amount of low-lying areas. The average parcel size in the town is 28.3 acres (11.5 ha).

Natural resources in the town include Lower Turtle Lake in the northeast part of the town, Big Moon Lake in the west central part of town, and Turtle Creek in the southeast part of the town. There is little commercial development.

3. Town of Clinton

The town of Clinton's year 2000 population was 920. Of the natural features in the town, the most prominent ones are Poskin Lake in the central part of the town and the Vermillion River in the south-central part of the town. There are a few commercial enterprises along the US 8 corridor, located primarily in the community of Poskin. These include a grain mill, a drinking and eating establishment, and an automobile towing company. The town of Clinton town hall is located on the north side of US 8 in Poskin.

Agricultural land use in the town of Clinton plays a prominent role. The average parcel size is 24.3 acres (9.8 ha). When compared to the towns of Polk County, agriculture is a more important part of the economy.

4. Town of Barron

The town of Barron's year 2000 population was 1,014. The topography of the town of Barron has resulted in a predominately agricultural landscape. Large agricultural parcels create an average parcel size of 23.9 acres (9.7 ha). Residential development is spreading from the City of Barron to some parts of the town.

The Yellow River runs through the western section of the town and the Barker Creek runs along the eastern edge of the town. Barker's Woods is one of the natural resources located near US 8.

5. Town of Stanley

Only Sections 30 and 31 of the town of Stanley are within the project study area. The town of Stanley's year 2000 population was 2,229. There are no commercial establishments. There are a few residences in these two sections and the Red Cedar River traverses the corridor. The average parcel size in the town is 11.1 acres (4.5 ha).

6. Village of Turtle Lake

The Village of Turtle Lake's year 2000 population was 1,000. The Village of Turtle Lake has experienced noteworthy land use changes over the past ten years with the construction of the St. Croix Casino on the north side of US 8. The village's residential development has remained contiguous with the existing Village center. The average parcel size in the Village is 1.85 acres (0.73 ha).

Since the completion of the casino, numerous ancillary commercial developments have emerged in its vicinity. These developments include two hotels (one associated with the casino), a gas station, dining establishments, auto parts stores, grocery stores, and a modular homes retailer. Most of the commercial land uses are located along US 8.

7. City of Barron

The City of Barron's year 2000 population was 3,248. The City of Barron's land use pattern is a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Residential land use is primarily single-family with limited multifamily development. Commercial development is located on US 8 and within a couple blocks north and south of the US 8 corridor. The retail/commercial developments in the City include gas stations, a grocery store, banks, and a car dealership. The average parcel size in the City is 0.61 acres (0.25 ha).

The Jenny-O Turkey Store dominates industrial development in the City of Barron. The Turkey Store has facilities throughout the City but includes a major processing facility directly on US 8. The Turkey Store is a regional employment source employing 2,500 people throughout the area.

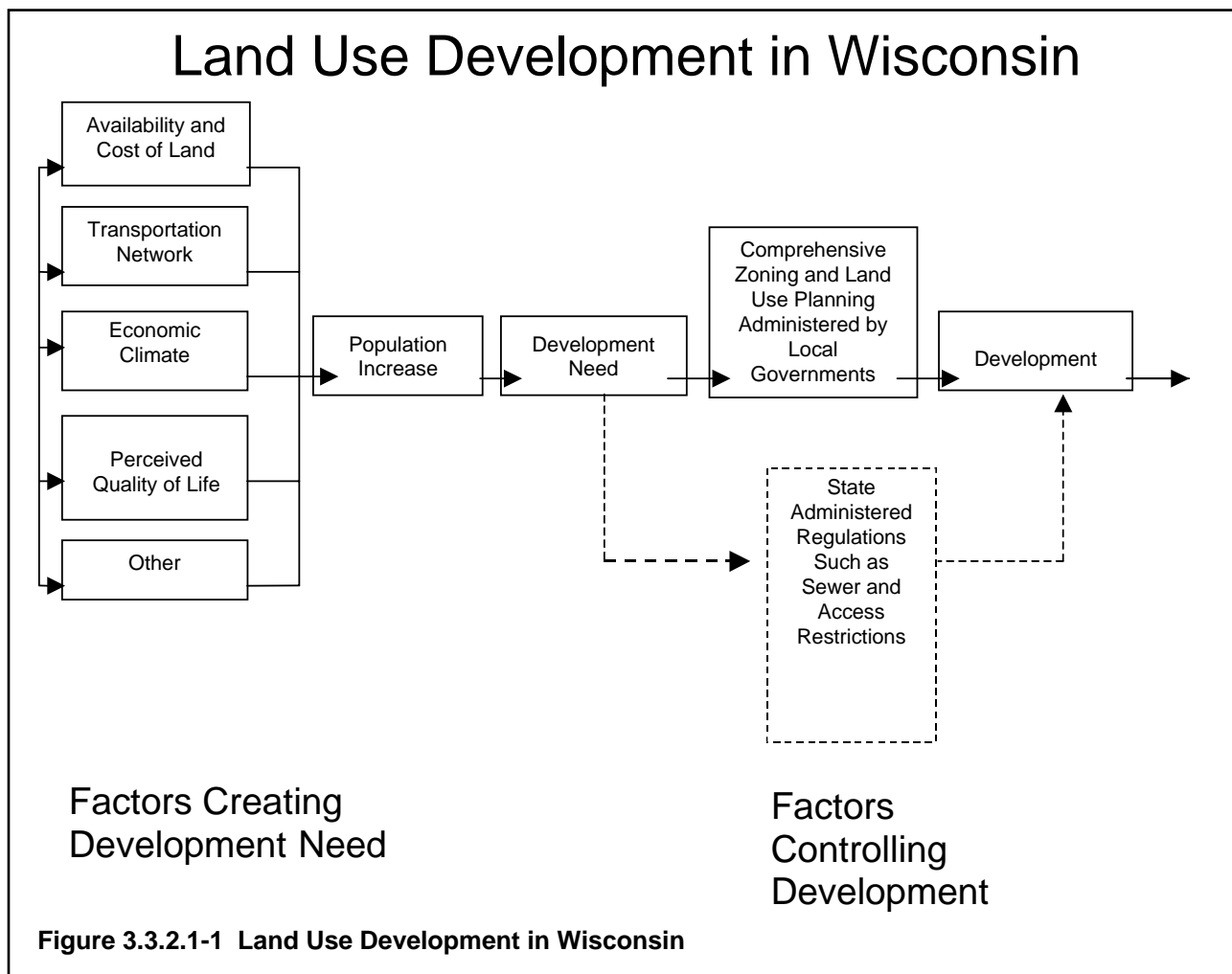
3.3.2 Existing Land Use Plans and Zoning

3.3.2.1 Land Use Regulation in Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, the State has few statutory powers to influence land use patterns and development. Therefore, the primary administrators of land use regulations are local governments. Local governments may control private land uses for protecting property from floods, erosion, and other natural hazards; protecting resources such as drinking water, lakes, streams, and wetlands; separating conflicting land uses; and planning for orderly community growth. Cities, villages, towns, and counties can adopt comprehensive zoning and land use regulations, although some have chosen not to. Planning and zoning responsibilities include preparing a comprehensive plan, an official zoning map, and zoning ordinances. The zoning map and ordinances designate the type of allowable uses on specific parcels of land. Fifty-eight of Wisconsin's 72 counties have countywide zoning. In 55 of these counties, 40 percent or more of the towns also have zoning. Public planning and zoning processes are important for desirable growth and resource protection.

State agencies also can influence land use by exercising their statutory and administrative powers within their respective areas of responsibility. WisDOT can use eminent domain and police powers to purchase land for roadways as well as limit/control access onto state highways. The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) administers the Farmland Preservation Program. This program indirectly encourages agricultural land uses and conservation practices by providing tax relief for farmers. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce administers sanitary codes that regulate the location of on-site sanitary systems. The WDNR also has authority to purchase and manage land, permit waterway alterations, and zone shorelands and wetlands.

The State of Wisconsin, through state laws, policies, and agency activities can directly and indirectly affect land use in Wisconsin. In areas where inadequate local zoning and land use planning exist, the administrative powers help protect environmental resources. These powers are limited when compared with comprehensive zoning and planning powers administered by local jurisdictions. See Figure 3.3.2.1-1 for a graphical representation of land use development in Wisconsin.



The 1999-2001 state biennial budget included legislation that made significant changes to planning-related statutes. The comprehensive planning legislation for Wisconsin states that by 2010, every county, city, village, and town engaging in land use decisions needs to have a comprehensive plan as defined by state statute. The legislation established a grant program for comprehensive planning. Wisconsin statutes focus on the development and implementation of local comprehensive plans and provide a grant program to assist local government in the development of comprehensive plans. The communities in the US 8 study area are included in this state mandate. Currently, there are no US 8 communities that have satisfied the requirement of the statutes. The status of local comprehensive planning is addressed in the following section.

3.3.2.2 Local Land Use Planning

As the two subsequent sections describe, the communities in the project study area are at various stages of comprehensive planning. Since many are just beginning their planning process, they will have the chance to integrate the preferred US 8 alternative, which will be identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), into their comprehensive plans. Planning methods that can be applied at the local level include developing a functional roadway system plan, identifying appropriate areas for transportation supportive land uses, identifying opportunities for local connectivity and circulation within the community, and employing access management strategies. The US 8 corridor can be preserved at the local level by officially mapping the future US 8 corridor and establishing appropriate building setbacks for new developments along the corridor.

It is important that local municipalities work together to initiate both community- and corridor-wide planning efforts to ensure that a common and sustainable vision is developed for the region. The EIS and Comprehensive Plan processes are dependent on each other to ensure that the land use and transportation relationship are considered. The timing of the US 8 EIS and the 2010 Comprehensive Plan deadline for communities will help establish a collaborative approach to both land use and transportation planning for the US 8 corridor. The US 8 EIS process will continue to initiate collaboration between WisDOT and local units of government to begin a corridor planning process that includes both land use and transportation requirements and directives determined by Comprehensive Plan legislation and the WisDOT Corridors 2020 Plan.

The EIS document is a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), representing the first step in the approach to ultimate construction of a transportation corridor. Because the timeline can span over several decades, the greatest impact from local planning and corridor preservation efforts would likely occur during Tier 2:

- For alternatives located on-alignment, collaboration with local transportation system plans and comprehensive plans would occur. Elements of these plans could include such things as appropriate land use and balance, building setbacks, access management strategies, proper intersection spacing, roadway functionality, and enhanced local circulation.
- For alternatives located on a new alignment WisDOT could officially designate and map more explicit corridor plans for the ultimate expressway/freeway corridor. An example of this would be to apply Wisconsin State Statutes (Wis. Stat. 84.295) to designate and map those segments where relocated expressway or freeway routes are being proposed. This would ensure that the future viability of such corridors would be preserved and not be left unprotected against future growth and development.

A. Barron County

None of the communities in the project study area have completed comprehensive plans consistent with Wisconsin's comprehensive planning statutes. The only planning document recently completed was the Barron County Land Use Plan that was adopted in May 2001 by the Barron County Board of Supervisors. This plan provides land use guidance to unincorporated parts of the county and an overview of county trends and resources. It suggests a ring pattern of development near incorporated areas to take advantage of the proximity to municipal services. This practice would focus development in urban and suburban areas, which may help reduce encroachment into the rural areas. It also recommends specific practices that would help minimize nonagricultural rural development. It does not, however, provide comprehensive guidance as mandated in state statutes.

In fall 2002, the City of Barron applied for a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning grant. The other communities that participated in the grant application were the cities of Chetek and Cumberland, villages of Almena and Turtle Lake, and the towns of Almena, Barron, Bear Lake, Chetek, Crystal Lake, Dovre, Doyle, Maple Plain, Prairie Lake, Sioux Creek, Stanford, Stanley, and Sumner. In the spring of 2003, the City was notified that it would receive funding for the communities to complete comprehensive plans. The comprehensive planning process began in the fall of 2003 and is expected to take approximately three years to complete.

From the standpoint of the communities adjacent to US 8, the timing of the comprehensive planning process is excellent. Not only will they need to complete local plans to meet the state mandate, the planning process can also consider and incorporate proposed US 8 improvements. Communities that would be directly affected by the US 8 project and that were part of the grant application include the City of Barron, villages of Turtle Lake and Almena, and the towns of Almena, Barron, and Stanley.

B. Polk County

A draft land use plan for Polk County was completed in October 2002 and was adopted by the Polk County Board of Supervisors. This was the first land use plan prepared for Polk County. The land use plan is comparable to the Barron County Land Use Plan in that it provides guidance to the unincorporated parts of the county and an overview of county trends and resources. It also suggests a ring pattern of development near incorporated areas to take advantage of the proximity to municipal services. Like the Barron County Land Use Plan, the Polk County Land Use Plan recommends practices to minimize nonagriculture development. The Polk County Land Use Plan is not consistent with the state's current comprehensive planning statutes.

The town of Clayton is the only community in the project study area that has completed its own plan. The Town of Clayton Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted in December 1998. This plan predates the change to Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation and therefore does not meet the statute's requirements. Because the plan was prepared specifically for one community, it does provide more detailed guidance than the two county-level plans. It suggests that most residential development should occur near Lake Magnor, Lake Gilbert, and the unincorporated community of Joel. It also suggests that the town should preserve the agricultural landscape as much as possible to maintain agricultural production, the most important part of the town's economy.

3.3.2.3 Local Land Use Zoning

Most of the jurisdictions in the project study area have adopted a zoning ordinance. The one exception is the town of Balsam Lake in Polk County. In all of the project study area towns, including the town of Balsam Lake, shoreland zoning is in effect. The statewide ordinance supersedes all local zoning ordinances and includes areas within 1,000 feet (305 m) of lakes and 300 feet (91 m) of navigable streams. In the case of Polk County with its many lakes and streams, shoreland zoning restrictions pertain to a large percent of the rural land.

The jurisdictions within the study area have each adopted a relatively full set of basic zoning controls that are adequate to regulate the type, location, and intensity of development as shown in Table 3.3.2.3-1. More detailed zoning controls related to environmental protection of sensitive upland areas, cultural and visual resources, development aesthetics, and economic development objectives are generally lacking. Zoning controls related to traffic safety are substantially more prevalent in the City and Village ordinances.

Table 3.3.2.3-1**Adopted Plans, Ordinances, and Regulatory Maps**

| Adopted Plans, Ordinances, and Regulatory Maps | Town of Almena | Town of Apple River | Town of Balsam Lake | Town of Barron | Town of Beaver | Town of Clayton | Town of Clinton | Town of Maple Grove | Town of St. Croix Falls | Town of Stanley | Town of Turtle Lake | Village of Turtle Lake | City of Barron |
|--|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| A. Land Use Plan & Map | C | | | C | | B | | | A | C | | A,C | A,C |
| B. Smart Growth Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C. Small Area Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D. Zoning Ordinance and Map | A | A | | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| E. Shoreland Zoning | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| F. Land Division Ordinance | A | A | | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| G. Official Map | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H. Access Control Ordinance | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

A = plans and ordinances exist, B = partial plans exist, C = update in progress, blank = no plans or ordinances exist

A. Polk County

Along US 8, land is zoned for commercial development in a few locations including near WIS 35 (N) in the town of St. Croix Falls, near County H (N) and WIS 46 (N), and around Range in the town of Apple River, and near the intersection of US 8 and 125th Avenue in the town of Beaver. The only land zoned for residential development along the US 8 corridor is near Range.

B. Barron County

Most of the land along US 8 in Barron County is zoned agriculture or agriculture-residential. Some exceptions exist near US 53 where land is zoned residential and commercial. West of the City of Barron in the town of Barron, land is zoned single-family residential. Other pockets of residentially zoned land occur near many of the lakes.

3.3.3 Predicted Land Use Under Current Policies

The future of the study area, and much of Barron and Polk Counties, is difficult to predict with a high degree of certainty. From 1990-2000, the total population of the project study area increased 12.1 percent. For the same time period, the state's population increased 9.6 percent. This reflects both the stability of the agricultural economy and the modest growth of the nonagricultural portion of the regional economy. The growth is primarily focused in the City of Barron, Village of Turtle Lake, town of Apple River, and town of Balsam Lake.

There are two factors that have accelerated the historic rate of development:

1. Increasing number of year-round recreational homes.

The project study area has many natural assets that people find appealing. There are numerous lakes, large sections of wooded land, and many working agricultural enterprises. Seasonal lake homes have been a fixture of the area for decades, but in the past 10-15 years, seasonal homes have been transitioning to year-round homes. This transition can be attributed to many factors but the two primary influences are wealth and accessibility.

Personal wealth has increased dramatically since the early 1990s, particularly for the residents of metropolitan areas. This wealth has increased the amount of discretionary income for many people, and one of the outcomes is the investment in a second property or relocation to a new home. The state and national highway system provides efficient and convenient access to the region for Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area residents and for residents of other parts of Wisconsin.

2. Increasing tourism opportunities in the Village of Turtle Lake.

The construction of the St. Croix Chippewa Casino in Turtle Lake has spurred a number of tourism/service sector business openings. In addition to the employment opportunities at the casino itself, other allied employment opportunities include two hotels, several restaurants, a gas station and convenience store, and other enterprises.

These two factors have contributed to Barron and Polk County's population growth. The two counties should expect continued population growth in rural and urban areas. Employment in agriculture, government, and industrial sectors is expected to remain stable, helping maintain the existing population of workers.

Development and population growth will create impacts on the jurisdictions within the project study area. The general location of these land use impacts will be partially focused by the improvements to US 8. The precise location and magnitude of these impacts will be determined by the land use planning and zoning decisions made by each jurisdiction within the project study area.

The current population projections between the year 2000 and 2020, prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, are portrayed in Table 3.3.3-1.

Table 3.3.3-1

US 8 Population Projections for Project Study Area Municipalities

| Municipality in Study Area | Actual Census Population | | % Increase 1990- 2000 | 2005 Estimated Population | Projected Population | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | 1990 | 2000 | | | 2010 | 2020 |
| Town of Almena | 773 | 910 | 17.7% | 946 | 1,003 | 1,085 |
| Town of Apple River | 815 | 1,067 | 30.9% | 1,141 | 1,220 | 1,347 |
| Town of Balsam Lake | 1,067 | 1,384 | 29.7% | 1,460 | 1,592 | 1,766 |
| Town of Barron | 1,015 | 1,014 | -0.1% | 991 | 988 | 984 |
| Town of Beaver | 663 | 753 | 13.6% | 832 | 846 | 922 |
| Town of Clayton | 780 | 912 | 16.9% | 975 | 977 | 1,025 |
| Town of Clinton | 849 | 920 | 8.4% | 981 | 967 | 1,005 |
| Town of Maple Grove | 926 | 968 | 4.5% | 986 | 953 | 932 |
| Town of St. Croix Falls | 1,034 | 1,119 | 8.2% | 1,235 | 1,238 | 1,336 |
| Town of Stanley | 2,087 | 2,229 | 6.8% | 2,417 | 2,376 | 2,492 |
| Town of Turtle Lake | 621 | 622 | 0.2% | 641 | 609 | 593 |
| Village of Almena | 625 | 720 | 15.2% | 761 | 791 | 852 |
| Village of Turtle Lake | 811 | 1,000 | 23.3% | 1,085 | 1,064 | 1,263 |
| City of Barron | 2,986 | 3,248 | 8.8% | 3,312 | 3,483 | 3,656 |
| Study Area TOTAL: | 15,052 | 16,866 | 12.1% | 17,763 | 18,107 | 19,258 |
| Barron County | 40,750 | 44,963 | 10.3% | 46,805 | 47,401 | 49,386 |
| Polk County | 34,773 | 41,319 | 18.8% | 44,613 | 45,901 | 49,592 |

Source: Department of Administration Demographic Services Center, 1993, 2000, 2003, 2005

Population increases within the study area will create development pressures. These pressures will manifest themselves in residential, commercial, and industrial development. Table 3.3.3-2a (English units) and Table 3.3.3-2b (metric units) estimate how much additional land would be converted from agricultural use to support these population increases.

Table 3.3.3-2a

Predicted 2020 Land Use Necessary to Support Projected Population Increases (Acres)

| Municipality in Study Area | Residential ¹ (acres) | | Percent Change | Manufacturing, Commercial, and Industrial ² (acres) | | Percent Change | Agricultural ³ (acres) | | Percent Change |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2000 | 2020 | | 2000 | 2020 | | 2000 | 2020 | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Town of Almena | 796 | 857 | 8% | 13 | 28 | 119% | 11,099 | 11,023 | -1% |
| Town of Apple River | 1,457 | 1,839 | 26% | 204 | 462 | 126% | 8,508 | 7,868 | -8% |
| Town of Balsam Lake | 1,781 | 2,273 | 28% | 55 | 125 | 128% | 8,953 | 8,391 | -7% |
| Town of Barron ^A | 480 | 480 | 0% | 123 | 243 | 97% | 14,720 | 14,601 | -1% |
| Town of Beaver | 1,025 | 1,255 | 22% | 36 | 80 | 122% | 9,199 | 8,925 | -3% |
| Town of Clayton | 897 | 1,008 | 12% | 18 | 38 | 112% | 11,562 | 11,431 | -1% |
| Town of Clinton | 594 | 648 | 9% | 22 | 46 | 109% | 14,556 | 14,478 | -1% |
| Town of Maple Grove ^A | 453 | 453 | 0% | 7 | 14 | 100% | 17,028 | 17,021 | 0% |
| Town of St. Croix Falls | 1,273 | 1,520 | 19% | 247 | 542 | 119% | 10,994 | 10,452 | -5% |
| Town of Stanley | 1,752 | 1,769 | 1% | 389 | 824 | 112% | 9,186 | 8,734 | -5% |
| Town of Turtle Lake ^A | 361 | 361 | 0% | 217 | 424 | 95% | 16,897 | 16,690 | -1% |
| Village of Almena | 51 | 60 | 18% | 41 | 49 | 18% | 90 | 73 | -23% |
| Village of Turtle Lake | 75 | 95 | 26% | 141 | 178 | 26% | 557 | 500 | -11% |
| City of Barron | 153 | 172 | 13% | 112 | 126 | 13% | 133 | 100 | -33% |
| Study Area TOTAL: | 11,148 | 12,790 | 15% | 1,625 | 3,178 | 96% | 133,482 | 130,287 | -2% |

^A Towns are expected to have a population decrease between 2000 and 2020 but residential land is held constant in the towns.

¹ Residential land use estimates = (year 2020 population projections ÷ persons per household) x acres per household e.g., Town of Apple River = (1,347 ÷ 2.55) x 3.48 = 1,839 acres.

² Manufacturing, commercial, and industrial land use estimates = (Year 2000 existing acres in manufacturing, commercial, and industrial land use ÷ year 2000 population) x year 2020 population projections + existing acres in manufacturing, commercial, and industrial land use, e.g., Town of Apple River = (204 ÷ 1,067) x 1,347 + 204 = 462 acres.

³ Agriculture land use estimates = year 2000 existing acres in agriculture land–new residential land use–new manufacturing, commercial, and industrial land use, e.g., Town of Apple River = 8,508–(1,839–1,457)–(462–204) = 7,868.

Table 3.3.3-2b

Predicted 2020 Land Use Necessary to Support Projected Population Increases (Hectares)

| Municipality in Study Area | Residential (hectares) | | Percent Change | Manufacturing, Commercial, and Industrial (hectares) | | Percent Change | Agricultural (hectares) | | Percent Change |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------|--|--------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | 2000 | 2020 | | 2000 | 2020 | | 2000 | 2020 | |
| Town of Almena | 322 | 347 | 8% | 5 | 11 | 119% | 4,492 | 4,461 | -1% |
| Town of Apple River | 590 | 744 | 26% | 83 | 188 | 126% | 3,443 | 3,184 | -8% |
| Town of Balsam Lake | 721 | 920 | 28% | 22 | 51 | 128% | 3,623 | 3,396 | -7% |
| Town of Barron | 194 | 194 | 0% | 50 | 98 | 97% | 5,957 | 5,909 | -1% |
| Town of Beaver | 415 | 508 | 22% | 15 | 32 | 122% | 3,723 | 3,612 | -3% |
| Town of Clayton | 363 | 408 | 12% | 7 | 15 | 112% | 4,679 | 4,626 | -1% |
| Town of Clinton | 240 | 262 | 9% | 9 | 19 | 109% | 5,891 | 5,859 | -1% |
| Town of Maple Grove | 183 | 183 | 0% | 3 | 6 | 100% | 6,891 | 6,888 | 0% |
| Town of St. Croix Falls | 515 | 615 | 19% | 100 | 219 | 119% | 4,449 | 4,230 | -5% |
| Town of Stanley | 709 | 716 | 1% | 158 | 334 | 112% | 3,717 | 3,534 | -5% |
| Town of Turtle Lake | 146 | 146 | 0% | 88 | 171 | 95% | 6,838 | 6,754 | -1% |
| Village of Almena | 21 | 24 | 18% | 17 | 20 | 18% | 36 | 30 | -23% |
| Village of Turtle Lake | 30 | 38 | 26% | 57 | 72 | 26% | 225 | 202 | -11% |
| City of Barron | 62 | 70 | 13% | 45 | 51 | 13% | 54 | 40 | -33% |
| Study Area TOTAL: | 4,512 | 5,176 | 15% | 658 | 1,286 | 96% | 54,018 | 52,725 | -2% |

Source: Department of Administration Demographic Services Center, 1993, 2000, 2003

Locating where future development might occur is highly speculative. Unpredictable factors such as willing sellers, buyer preferences, employer decisions, and many other variables influence where the development might occur. If available, comprehensive plans would help predict where development would occur. Unfortunately planning data in the project study area was limited.

Polk and Barron Counties have land use plans; however, these plans address only the unincorporated sections (towns) of the county and could be considered policy/strategy plans rather than development plans. Both plans suggest that development should be located near existing urbanized areas as much as possible and scattered rural development should be limited to preserve agricultural land. Neither plan includes a land use map for the county or towns. It appears the plans were developed to identify strategies and recommendations that can be locally adopted and implemented if desired.

The one exception is the town of Clayton in Polk County. The town adopted a comprehensive land use plan in December 1998. The plan calls for residential development to occur adjacent to Lake Gilbert and in the unincorporated community of Joel. The plan does not identify any industrial or commercial development in the town.

Because of the limited availability of planning documents, the no-build land use forecasts documented in the US 8 EIS Indirect and Cumulative Impacts Analysis are presented as one possible approximation of future development. The indirect and cumulative impact analysis used two different analysis methodologies (Delphi Surveys and Expert Panels) to predict land use changes with and without the US 8 improvements. Since the analysis incorporated two unique and independent analysis methodologies, it afforded project staff the opportunity to compare expected changes and develop a best-fit scenario.

Figure 3.3.3-1 documents the No-build Alternative predicted land use. The land use predictions documented on this map represent a summary of the indirect and cumulative impact analysis participants' opinions.

In summary, predicting the location of future developments is an inexact science that is highly dependent on local decisions. Construction of year-round seasonal homes is likely to continue around lakes and near wooded areas. Referring to Figure 3.3.3-1 may also provide some insight on the location of future developments. Development is occurring and will likely continue with or without any transportation improvements.

3.3.4 Existing Transportation Corridor

3.3.4.1 US 8 Highway Corridor

A. Traffic Composition

A variety of traffic uses the US 8 corridor. Traffic includes regional (through) traffic, local traffic, and tourist traffic.

Regional traffic makes up a good portion of the traffic that travels on the US 8 corridor. Regional traffic uses US 8 as it passes through the central part of Polk and Barron counties and provides a direct connection to US 53, US 63, WIS 35, WIS 25, WIS 65, and WIS 46. US 8 provides regional linkage and access for trade and metropolitan services available in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Eau Claire, Wisconsin areas. This usage is reflected in the number of trucks that are on US 8, which currently ranges between 9 and 12 percent. US 8 also serves interregional traffic because it extends both to the east and west of the project limits. To the west, US 8 becomes Trunk Highway (TH 8) in Minnesota, and to the east, US 8 continues to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

WisDOT conducted Origin-Destination (OD) studies within and around the Village of Turtle Lake and City of Barron. The OD studies consisted of traffic stops at four locations, each in the Village of Turtle Lake and the City of Barron. In Turtle Lake, traffic stops were located on US 8 on each side of the village, and on US 63 (N) and US 63 (S). In Barron, the traffic stops were also located on US 8 on each side of the City and on WIS 25 (N) and WIS 25 (S). At these traffic stops, the DOT would ask travelers where they were coming from and where they were going to. Surveys were handed out and participants had the option of sending their responses in the mail.

Results indicate that in both Turtle Lake and Barron, approximately a third of the total traffic would use a bypass if one were available. The bypasses would draw about 40 percent of the total truck traffic in Turtle Lake and about 48 percent of the total truck traffic in Barron.

Within the project limits, US 8 links the communities of Range, Turtle Lake, Almena, Poskin, and Barron. It provides mobility to adjacent communities for residents, industry, farmers, and businesses within the study area. Local traffic uses US 8 as a primary route to area workplaces, businesses, and shopping centers. Primarily a two-lane highway, US 8 is a four-lane section within the Village of Turtle Lake, a distance of 1.2 miles (1.9 km), and the City of Barron, a distance of 2.8 miles (4.5 km). In Turtle Lake and Barron, US 8 fulfills a dual function for the commercial establishments along the corridor by providing access and visibility to customers.

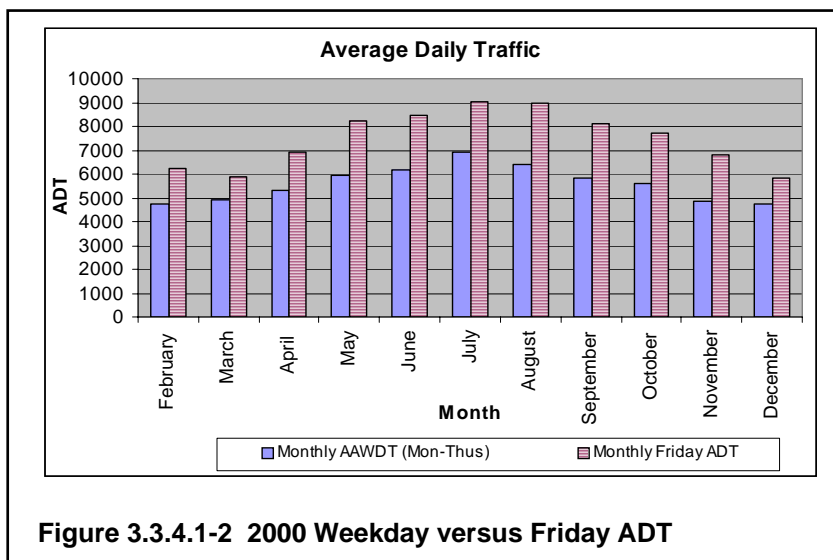
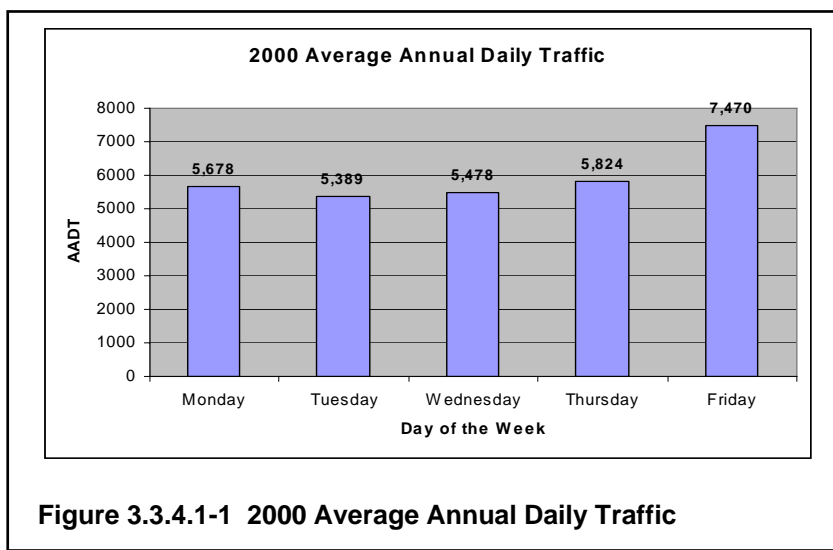
While US 8 provides an important local connection, it also serves as a main route for tourists going to the many areas of interests along and around the corridor. These tourist activities range from recreation associated with the many lakes and rivers in the region to indoor gaming at the St. Croix Casino in Turtle Lake.

B. Traffic Characteristics

Tourist traffic contributes to the character of the US 8 corridor, especially during Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons in the summer months. During 2000, the average annual weekday traffic (AAWDT) for Mondays through Thursdays was approximately 5,600 vpd. The AAWDT for Fridays was 34 percent higher at about 7,500 vpd¹ (see Figure 3.3.4.1-1). Looking at AAWDTs over the course of the entire year, Friday ADT is higher than the rest of the week during every month and is particularly high during July and August, the busiest tourist season. In these two months, volumes are about 6,600 ADT and on Fridays, they increase over 36 percent to about 9,000 ADT.² This is shown in Figure 3.3.4.1-2.

¹ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2000 Automatic Traffic Recorder Data.

² Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2000 Automatic Traffic Recorder Data.

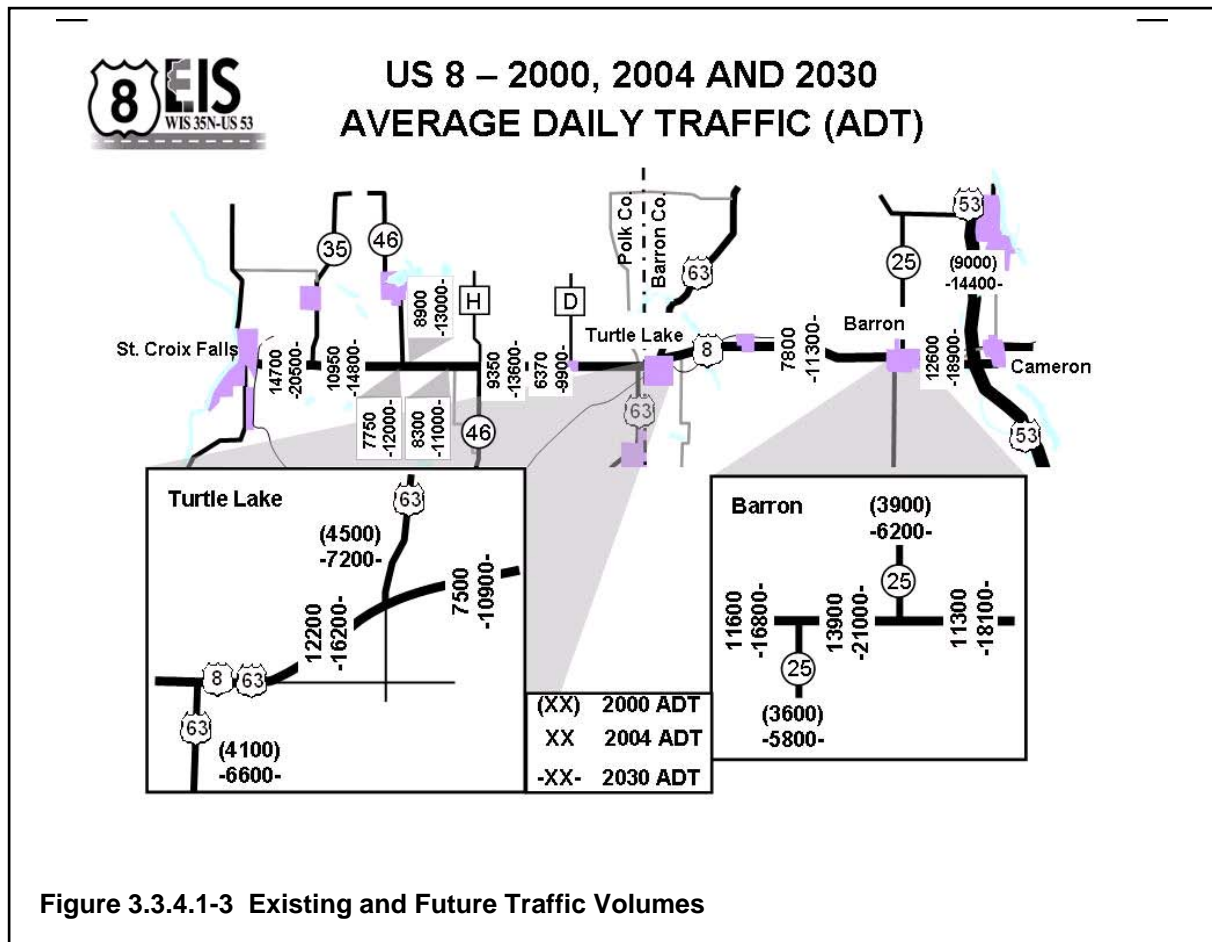


Along certain portions of the corridor, both driving conditions and safety are an issue, particularly within the Village of Turtle Lake and City of Barron. High speeds and many access points contribute to these safety concerns because of the conflict points associated with access. Also, especially within Barron, pedestrian safety is a concern because many residents live on one side of town and walk to various destinations on the other side of town. Some of the Turkey Store employees must park on the south side of US 8 and walk across the highway to the facility buildings on the north side.

The various types of travelers using US 8 can affect the traffic flow on the highway. Frequent users, such as commuters, are more familiar with the road and tend to travel faster. Infrequent users, such as tourists, are unfamiliar with the facility and often travel at slower or varying speeds. Farmers also drive equipment along the highway at slower speeds, impacting the traffic flow of US 8.

C. Existing Traffic and Historical Growth

Figure 3.3.4.1-3 shows the existing and future traffic volumes along the study corridor. Existing traffic volumes in the rural areas range from 6,300 to 10,950 ADT. When US 8 passes through the communities of Turtle Lake and Barron traffic volumes increase to 12,200 and 13,900 ADT, respectively. Truck percentages in the rural segments range between 9 and 12 percent.



Greater traffic volumes in the urban areas can be attributed to local trips, traffic destined for the casino in Turtle Lake, and employees traveling to and from the area's major employers such as The Turkey Store, Barron's largest employer.

Traffic along the US 8 corridor is continuously growing. Between 1970 and 2000, traffic has increased between 160 and 300 percent (between 5 and 10 percent annually)³ in rural segments of the corridor.

D Projected Traffic

The Traffic Forecasting Section of the Bureau of State Highway Programs projected future traffic volumes for the year 2030 along the US 8 corridor. These traffic projections are based on growth over time from anticipated regional growth, changes in demographics, and economic factors. This type of forecast is generally referred to as normal traffic growth and is based mainly on historic trends. Normal traffic growth assumes that the highway corridor area will continue to grow at these rates and experience growth similar to those in the past.

³ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Highway Traffic Volume Data*, 1970-2000.

The forecast is based on a conservative, linear growth of approximately 2 percent per year along the entire corridor. According to the Traffic Forecasting Section, the forecast assumes that no significant new traffic generators will be developed in the area for the foreseeable future.

In the year 2030, traffic volumes along the rural portions are projected to increase by about 45 percent or between 9,900 and 14,800 ADT. Urban traffic volumes are anticipated to grow to between 16,200 and 21,000 ADT in this same time frame. See Figure 3.3.4.1-3.

3.3.4.2 Other Transportation Modes

Other transportation modes that serve the US 8 corridor area in Polk and Barron Counties are somewhat limited. Auto is the primary mode of passenger transportation in and through the US 8 project area. Truck travel is also a major mode of freight transportation. Air and bicycle transport mainly serves recreational functions in the area.

A. Transit Service

Transit is available only for the elderly and disabled through Polk County Transportation for the Disabled and Elderly, Inc. The Polk County Council on Aging also provides a volunteer drive service. The only public transit service available in Barron County is the Rice Lake bus system that serves the residents of Rice Lake.

Private transit is offered by the St. Croix Casino from Bloomer, Chetek, Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Hudson, New Richmond, Rice Lake, Spooner to the casino. Service is generally offered Monday through Saturday with Sunday service from some locations. Departure times vary by location with more frequent service from Eau Claire. The casino also provides a shuttle service from nearby Minnesota cities including Fridley, Maplewood, and Stillwater.

B. Rail Transportation

The Canadian National (CN) provides freight rail service from Amery, Dresser, and Osceola in Polk County with a connection to the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in Minnesota. The Dresser to Amery section is no longer in service and is under negotiation to be converted to a recreational trail. The segment would be connected to the current rails-to-trails segment that runs from Amery to Alma in Barron County.

In Barron County, freight rail service is provided by the Union Pacific (UP) and Wisconsin Central Limited (WCL). The UP corridor parallels USH 53 and runs from Chetek south to connect with an east-west mainline in Eau Claire. The WCL operates lines between Chetek and Rice Lake and east-west paralleling US 8 that connects Barron to other WCL lines. The north-south and east-west lines of the WCL intersect in Cameron.

C. Air Transportation

Two publicly owned airports are located in Polk County in Amery and Osceola. The Amery Municipal Airport and the L.O. Simenstad Airport in Osceola are classified as Basic Utility 1 and General Utility 1, respectively. No scheduled passenger service is available at either facility. Four publicly owned airports are located near the communities of Rice Lake, Barron, Chetek, and Cumberland. The Rice Lake Airport is classified as a Transport/Corporate (T/C) airport, and it serves corporate jets, small passenger and cargo jet aircraft used in regional service, and small airplanes used in commuter air service. The Barron Airport serves small single-engine and small twin-engine aircraft and is therefore classified as a Basic Utility-A (BU-A) airport. The Chetek and Cumberland airports serve slightly larger aircraft than a BU-A airport, and they are classified as Basic Utility-B (BU-B) airports.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, located approximately 70 miles (112.7 km) by highway from the intersection of WIS 35 (N) and US 8, provides scheduled commercial passenger air service for Polk and Barron County residents.

D. Pedestrians and Bicycle

There are no designated bike lanes along the existing US 8 corridor, but bicyclists use the highways and county roads as bicycle routes. Polk County also provides off-road recreational biking on the Gandy Dancer State Trail north of St. Croix Falls and the Cattail Trail from Amery to Turtle Lake. Bicycle travel is not predominantly used for commuting in the area because of the long travel distances.

E. Pedestrian

Pedestrian facilities exist within the City of Barron and Village of Turtle Lake. Both communities have sidewalks in their residential areas that provide connections to residential, commercial, and retail districts. Within Barron and Turtle Lake there is a distinct need for pedestrians to be able to safely cross US 8. In Barron, pedestrians frequently cross US 8 in the downtown area, particularly near The Turkey Store. Worker parking is located on the south side of US 8 while the manufacturing facility is located on the north side. Similarly in Turtle Lake, the casino is located on the north side of US 8 and parking for employees and patrons is on the south side of the highway as are most of the local homes. Barron has crosswalks and a traffic signal at WIS 25 (N) to aid in pedestrian crossing. Turtle Lake does not currently have these facilities.